ISSN 0790-7389

Ó Domhnaill Abú

O Donnell Clan Newsletter No. 16

Summer 1991

Daniel and Margo O'Donnell.

'O'DONNELL ABU', R.T.E.'s Interval Signal.
From a programme presented by Paddy Clarke on RTE Radio 1.

In 1936 Radio Eireann, the Irish broadcasting service, then ten years old, realised the need for an 'interval signal'. "A cheerful tune without being too boisterous," was what they had in mind. It would be used during breaks in studio output, planned or otherwise as well as before and after regular broadcasting hours. This would help people to tune in their sets before broadcast; allow radio retailers to demonstrate their ware; facilitate service engineers in tuning and repair work; and prevent others from using that frequency.

In January a competition was held to select a tune. For a number of days, specially arranged tunes were played on harp over the 'air'. Listeners were asked to select the tune they preferred and to indicate their choice by letter. A total of 967 letters were received and the march, 'O'Donnell Abu', with 260 votes, was an easy winner. Others were - Dawning of the Day - 151, The Blackbird - 88, My Lagan Love - 58, Brian Boru's March - 52 etc. etc.

The problem of playing a continuous tune, with minimal attention to the playing device, had been solved in advance. Long playing records or tape recordings were not available at that time and use of 78 rpm. records was ruled out. The only means of providing this continuously available signal was to commission an electrically driven musical box with the tune programmed on its cylinder. The contract to manufacture and supply this machine went to the George Neuman firm in Berlin and the musical score of 'O Donnell Abu' was written out and sent to the manufacturer. In the summer of 1936 the completed 'O Donnell Abu' interval signal musical box arrived in the Henry St. Studios in Dublin. It was connected up and made ready for its inaugural playing before a group of very senior officials of the broadcasting service. To everyone's consternation the last two notes of the 23 notes did not play. A hurried inspection revealed that these two notes had not been inserted in the machine. The whole bulky mechanism was recrated and returned to the firm in Berlin. The German firm claimed that the final two notes had not been indicated on the score sent to them. The two notes, however, were added by Neuman's - they can still be seen clearly as being of slightly different material and mounting to the other 21 notes. Later in 1936 the machine arrived back in Dublin and was immediately put into service.

During its twenty years of service the 'O Donnell Abu' signal machine was in continuous use and it must hold the record for having logged the greatest number of hours of broadcasting for any such machine. In 1956 it was replaced by a tape recording of the tune, played on harp and celeste and arranged by Kevin Roche, Radio Eireann Music Dept.

The tape machine used to play this recording was itself a very special item. The entire quarter inch tape was wrapped around a drum in a slightly spiral fashion. In operation, the drum and tape rotated past the playing head of the machine - the head moved vertically in synchronism with the tape and dropped back to its starting position on completion of one playing. The process was continuous and 'O Donnell Abu' was, as with the earlier machine, always available for scheduled or emergency use. This huge tape machine was also made in Germany, by the Telefunken Co. It was more that ten times larger and heavier than the earlier machine. It operated continuously in the Radio Eireann Studios in Henry St., Dublin until the new Radio Centre opened in Donnybrook in 1973.

The 1956 recording of 'O Donnell Abu' is now played on a cartridge tape every morning at 6.28.05 am. on RTE Radio 1 prior to the commencement of programmes.

.....

Note: The Neuman machine was operated by a mains synchronous motor which drove the cylinder drum of the musical box. The electric motor was not self-starting and it was necessary to turn, clockwise, a saucer-size wheel to the approximate running speed, before switching on the electric supply. The motor would then 'pick up' and operate the machine. However, it was possible to, accidently (or otherwise) rotate the starting wheel anti-clockwise - which would cause the tune to play backwards, and this is believed to have happened on a few occasions.

The 1936 Neuman and 1956 Telefunken 'O'Donnell Abu' interval signal machines are preserved in RTE thanks to Paddy Clarke, Public Affairs Dept. RTE, whose material I have used here with his kind permission. Indeed, he tells me he rescued the 1936 machine from a skip where it was destined for the rubbish dump and had it restored to playing condition. I am also grateful to Paddy for the photo and permission to publish it.

V. O'Donnell.

LEFT. Radio Eireann 'interval signal' musical box manufactured by Georg Neuman and Co. Berlin in 1936 and continued in use until 1956. The wheel on front was used to achieve synchronous speed at switch-on.

RIGHT. Second generation 'interval signal' tape machine used in Radio Eireann from 1956 - 1973, made by Telefunken. The drum on which the tape was wound rotated, and the playing head rose vertically and dropped back continuously.

NEWS

At the Annual General Meeting of the O'Donnell Clan Association held in Jackson's Hotel, Ballybofey on the 11th March the following officers were elected: Vincent O'Donnell, Inver - chairman; Danny O'Donnell, Annagry - vice chairman; Ben O'Donnell, Lifford - secretary; Kathleen O'Donnell, Termon - treasurer; Chairman and secretary to act as P.R.O.'s.

It was quite a lively meeting with two major topics being discussed. First - the setting up of a Clan Centre. Second - the 1992 Clan Gathering. Indeed most of the night was taken up with the latter as the committee felt it was important to have dates and other details available as early as possible. This would enable us to have brochures made and circulated in good time giving everyone interested an opportunity to plan their trips.

The plans, at the moment, are as follows: official opening and enrollment will take place on Friday 12th June 1992 (probably in Donegal Town), followed by a talk on some aspect of O'Donnell history with photographic and genealogical displays etc. Saturday will consist of a bus tour to O'Donnell historic places in the County (possibly not the same as in '89) with a night's Irish entertainment to end the day. Sunday will be spent at Doon Rock (same as in '89). And the weekend will end with a farewell banquet. It is also hoped to have other O'Donnell related activities throughout the County before and after the official weekend but they will be organised and run by local committees in consultation with the central committee.

This O'Donnell Clan Gathering aims at commemorating the 400th anniversary of Red Hugh's escape and subsequent inauguration. As this is the first time that these events could properly and freely be remembered (on the other anniversaries this part of our country was under foreign power) I think everyone with O'Donnell blood should make an efford to be present.

The Rally of the Clans of Ireland originally planned to take place on the Hill of Tara now seems to be replaced by four provincial rallies. This, I believe, is the Tourist Board's idea of spreading business around. Furthermore, I hear they will take place earlier than ours, April or May. The Ulster event is planned for Eamhain Mhacha (outside Armagh) seat of the Kings of Ulster in the old days.

Work has begun on the O'Donnell Castle, Donegal Town. The Board of Public Works intend to re-roof the main tower, the portion built by the O'Donnells. This is to protect the interior and make it more suitable as a guide centre. Therefore, it will be closed to the public for the next year but, hopefully, re-opened for June '92.

The Last Will of Red Hugh O'Donnell.

When, almost a century ago, Fr. Denis Murphy, S.J., was preparing his edition of O Cleirigh's 'Life of Aodh Rua', he discovered a copy of part of Red Hugh's will in the archives of Simancas. We are indebted to Fr. John J. Silke for locating the entire will in the Archive of Valladolid University. This document was drawn up, shortly before Red Hugh's death, by the notary Domingo de Albiz, Fr. Florence Conry, O.F.M. (1560 - 1629) acting as translator and interpreter.

Here is an English translation prepared by Fr. Silke and first published by him in Studia Hibernica, no. 24 (1984-8)

Testamento del Conde Adonel yrlandes Septiembre 1602

Yn Dei nomine, amen. Sepan quantos esta carta de testamento ultima y por esta mera voluntad vieren, como yo el Conde Adonell de Yrlanda.....

In the name of God, Amen. Let these who shall see this last will and testament know that I, Lord O'Donnell of Ireland, being in bed, infirm in body of that illness which the Lord God has visited upon me, but sound in mind, with what judgment He was pleased to endow me, fearful of death, as is natural to my creaturely condition, and believing as a faithful and Catholic Christian in all that the holy mother Church of Rome holds and believes, do testify - and I know that I make and ordain this my testament to the praise and honour of God our Lord and of the glorious Virgin Mary His mother, whom I take and hold for my lady and advocate in all my acts and whom I beg and supplicate to pray for my soul, which I commend to her - and I make my said testament in the following manner:

Firstly, I offer my soul to my God and Lord Jesus Christ, Who bought and redeemed it with His precious and blessed blood, that He too be pleased to pardon me and raise me to His holy glory at His good pleasure, Amen.

Next, I commend my body to the clay of which it was formed, and I wish and order that it be interred in the church of the monastery of the Lord Saint Francis in Valladolid (erased: 'particular spot which the King our Lord shall appoint. And may his will be done in everyting').

Item, I now on the point of death, without hope of returning to the world, say and declare that I take God for witness that I do not say anything here contrary to the truth. I appoint and name my brother Don Rury O'Donnell as my heir to all my estates, lands, lordships, and vassals, whichsoever may be, to inherit, hold and enjoy them, now and in perpetuity, in manner and form according to law: such is my will.

Item, I entrust the said Don Rury my brother and Don Cathbharr my youngest brother jointly, with all my inheritance, to His Majesty's protection and grace.

Item, I declare that I take God for witness that the king our lord did not, and as I think will not, have in Ireland so loyal and faithful a servant as I, or one who would so often adventure his person in His Majesty's service. Next, I declare that the province of Connacht, which lies within my borders, was at the beginning of this war subject to the queen. I then laid it waste and conquered it, without help from anyone in the said province, except for some persons expelled from their territories in the said province, whom I took into my pay. It is unnecessary to detail here the other services which I rendered His Majesty in every part of Ireland.

Item, I declare that, as His Majesty knows, peace treaties were agreed between the Irish and the queen of England. But I undid them all, in order to serve God and His Majesty and to make me and my heirs his vassals.

Item, I declare that in case Lord O'Neill - as I think and consider he will not do - should wish to violate the treaties and agreements determined and made between Lord O'Neill and me and my heirs, I charge His Majesty to maintain my brother in the king's service and in my brother's rights.

Item, I say and declare that among the heads of treaties there is one which is that all the help, aid, or grace that His Majesty may give or send to Lord O'Neill and me, should be divided in two equal parts, and that the same should hold among our heirs. The stipulation was that one had no pre-eminence over the other and that in walking or travelling together whichever was the elder should be on the right

hand. I humbly beseech His Majesty to support my brother in conformity with the said treaty and (so as to keep him the more beholden) to give him some commission and if it seems good to His Majesty to pay him some salary.

Item, I declare and say that Don Redmond de Burgo, baron of Leitrim, who came here in my company, is a gentleman of note and has performed eminent services. Knowing his bravery and his ability to render important services to the king, I commend him to His Majesty, who may take it that he is very worthy of his patronage and is utterly reliable.

Also I commend my confessor, Father Florence Conry, to the king, begging him to provide him with some Irish bishopric, even should the Father be unwilling to undertake this burden. This will redound to the service of God and of His Majesty and will be for the common good of Ireland, since he is so holy a man and so very greatly experienced in Irish affairs. I humbly charge His Majesty to give order to consult him on Irish matters. And I say that His Majesty will be very well served to send the said Father as soon as possible to Ireland. He is highly regarded by all those lords [i.e. of the Confederacy], who value his counsel very much and who will pluck up courage at his arrival there.

I also recommend Matthew Tully, my secretary, to His Majesty's bounty. He has been a very loyal servant to me, hard-working and diligent. Knowing that my prayers must carry great weight with His Majesty, I am confident that his case for recompense will be considered. However handsome the award, he has earned it in full. I vouch for the loyalty of his service to His Majesty, his correct behaviour, and his knowledge of and expert skill in Irish affairs. I therefore beg His Majesty to provide that he be consulted in Irish business, and I assure His Majesty that he will not be deceived. Meanwhile I beg His Majesty to send money and some troops to Ireland to Lord O'Neill and to my brother before the notice of my death arrives.

Otherwise they will be lost, for as soon as that news arrives there they will all hasten to make peace with the English. For they had pinned all their hopes on the aid I was to bring them, and they would be reanimated if letters from the king, together with the money, were to anticipate word of my death. I also declare that there is with me a boy called Don Gelasio, my nephew; and I beg His Majesty to support him and - until they find embarkation to take them to my brother - my gentlemen and servants at Corunna. I also make bold to charge His Majesty to pay what little debt I owe in Spain: a hundred ducats to General Pedro de Zubiaur, another hundred to an Irish merchant named Nicholas Lynch, who is in the city of Corunna, and eighty ducats to Edward Eustace, an Irish gentleman also in Corunna.

Again I beg and implore His Majesty for alms (seeing I have not a real), so that some masses may be said for my soul. And I beg His Majesty that, after God our Lord has taken me from this world to the next, he give order to bury me in the said monastery of the Lord Saint Francis in the city of Valladolid with interment in keeping with the quality of my person, and with the masses ordered by His Majesty. I beg him, as so Christian and good a king and lord, to do so; and in his royal hands I leave whatever has to be done in this. And I revoke and cancel and give for nothing whatever will or wills I have before this made in writing or orally, and I desire that they be not valid or have faith in legal decision or out of it, except this which at present I do and ordain. I wish that it be carried out and be valid in legal decision and outside of it, and if it is not valid for my testament that it be valid for my codicil, and if it is not valid for my codicil that it be valid for my last will and by this mere will or in that way and form which may have legal standing. In testimony of which I make this said testament before Diego de Albiz, notary of the king, and the witnesses subscribing below, in the town of Simancas, on the seventh day of the month of September, in the year one thousand six hundred and two, there being present as witnesses Doctor John Ninan, Irishman, physician, and Matthew Tully and Maurice Ultach and Father Maurice Ultach and Francisco de Aguilar, all Irishmen, who know the language of Ireland and who declare themselves to be natives of Ireland, being present in the said town, and who swore in legal form in the hands of me, the present notary, in accordance with law, that they know Lord O'Donnell and that he is the same who is present and is of the same name written here. And the same lord signed his name in this register. And since I, the said notary, neither know nor understand the Irish language, which is that which the said testator speaks, for the making of this said testament Father Florence Conry translated the said language into Castilian. Father Conry explained to the said testator everything contained in the said testament and also wrote and composed the

translation. And the said witnesses who also know the said language, obliged by the same oath, declared that the said interpreter translated and repeated all that the said testator uttered, which is the same which is contained in this said testament. As witnesses also there were Juan de Albiz, Bachelor, and Juan Fernandez de Camara, servants of His Majesty, and Pedro de Monsalvo, present in the said town, who saw the said testator sign; and also the said interpreter signed; and the said testator, although he began to sign, did not, because of the gravity of his illness, sign, because he could not. (stet: the particular spot which the king our lord shall appoint. And may his will be done in everything.)

(Signatures:) Aodh O

I, F. Florencio Conrio

Tax: 4 reals

Before me,
Domingo de Albiz (Rubrica)

Margo and Daniel

Annette O'Donnell.

Margo and Daniel O'Donnell, the famous sister and brother singers, from Kincaslagh, Co. Donegal have carved their names in the world of show-business not just in Ireland but also in England and the U.S.A.

Margo, who in 1989 celebrated 25 years in the business, began her singing career while still at school. Her style of Country and Irish singing soon led her on the road to success. Over the years she has received many gold and silver disks for the sales of her records and has won many awards as the Queen of Country and Irish music. Now, based in Galway, she loves to return to her native county to perform for her many fans and friends and always takes time to talk to everyone.

Daniel began his career in Margo's band but soon left to form his own group. He still tells about the struggle he had to save the £600 required to make his first record - 'My Donegal Shore'. The popularity of this record brought him much success. Soon Ritz Records signed him on for a recording contract and Daniel was on his way to fame. Very soon Daniel's record sales topped the magical one million mark, and 'sold out' signs became common at his concerts. Like Margo, he has received many awards including 'Entertainer of the Year' in 1989 and the prestigious 'Donegal Person of the Year' in 1990.

If you are fortunate enough to get to one of their shows you are sure of a wonderful night's entertainment. And do say 'Hello' and tell them you are an 'O'Donnell'. They are two wonderful people who have not been affected by success or the world of show-business, they have not forgotten their 'roots', family, friends or fans and they are never too busy to stay around to sign autographs and talk to young and old alike.

Daniel, at present, is on a publicity tour of the U.S. where he will perform in Carnegie Hall, N.Y. on May 26th. I wish them continued success and long may they both continue to entertaine us.

'O Domhnaill Abu' is published by V.O'Donnell, Inver, Co. Donegal, Eire. Tel.:073-36059.
Subscription rates for 4 issues:
Ireland and Britain(rolled)....£6
Ireland and Britain(envelope)..£7
Other countries(rolled).....£7
Other countries(envelope).....£8
Copyright ISSN 0790-7389.

New members since ODA No.14.

D136 Mrs. Eileen Rhindress, 84-63-256 Street, Floral Park, N.Y. 1101 U.S.A.
D137 Dr. Desmond McNelis, 1110 Sleepy Dell Court, Towson, Maryland 21204, U.S.A.
D138 Joseph O'Donnell, 149 Main St., Setauket, N.Y., 11733-2832, U.S.A.
D139 William O'Donnell, Ards, Creeslough P.O., Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.
D140 Rory O'Donnell, Meenaneary, Carrick, Co. Donegal.

Many subscribers appear to be deeply engaged in tracing their 'roots' but most come up against a stone wall somewhere around the 1830's because few records were kept in Ireland up till then. One family, however, has been luckier than most in that their ancestor joined the East India Company where excellent records were kept.

Frank H. O'Donel (D72) of Essex, England, can, without any doubt, trace his pedigree from a Hugh O'Donel (note spelling) whose military record in the 'Officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1837' by Major V.C.P. Hodson reads as follows -

"O'Donel, Hugh (1785-1837). Lieut. Colonel, 13th N.I. b. Newport, co. Mayo, 2 July 1785. Cadet 1803. Arrived in India 29 Apr. 1805. Ensign 7 Apr. 1805. Lieut. 14 Apr. 1805. Capt. 15 Aug. 1820. Major 1 Apr. 1830. Lt. Col. 13 Aug. 1835. d. Nasirabad, Rajputana, 27 Sept. 1837.

bapt. 8 July 1785. Son of Francis O'Donel, of Fahey Lodge, Kilcommon, co. Mayo, and Catherine his wife. m. Dinajpur, Bengal, 1 Dec. 1826, Miss Jane Finch. (She died 8 Feb. 1892, aged 85.)

Services: Posted Lieut. to 7th N.I. in 1806. With Ramgarh Bn. 1811-13; comdd. the unsuccessful attack on Nowagarh 27 Feb. 1812, when his conduct was reported as having been "highly creditable." Adjt. 2/7th N.I. 25 June 1813 till 27 Sept. 1820. Third Mahratta War 1817-19. Transfd. to 13th N.I. (late 1/7th) May 1824. Actg. Bde. Major to Assam force 8 Aug. 1826. d.d. 49th N.I. 14 Aug 1832 till Oct. 1833. Posted Lt. Col. to 13th N.I. 30 Jan. 1836."

Who was this Hugh? His parents are given as Francis and Catherine O'Donel of Fahey Lodge, Kilcommon, Co. Mayo, and the year of his arrival in India as 1805.

Could it be that he was Hugh (105) in the Newport genealogical chart that appeared in 'O Domhnaill Abu' No. 3 ? While writing about the Newport Branch in that newsletter I did not comment on this Hugh as little is known of him except that he joined the East India Company, and this information comes from O'Donovan's Appendix to the Annals of the Four Masters, p. 2396.

Other factors supporting this theory: 1. Spelling of surname - on page 2392 AFM, O'Donovan comments on the unusual form used by the Newport Branch i.e. 'O'Donel', this has been the form used by Frank Hugh's ancestors down to the present generation.

2. In both cases the father's name is Francis. Indeed it is interesting to note the names of Hugh of Bengal's sons, i.e. James Hugh, Francis Hugh, Neil, Connel, and to compare them to those of Hugh of Newport's uncles, i.e. Hugh, Neil, John and Connel.

3. Although, I have seen no date given for Hugh of Newport's departure, it is quite likely to have been in the early years of the 19th. centuary.

Frank Hugh of Essex would be grateful if anyone could help establish the connection. Does anyone know the name of Francis (32b)'s wife? Does anyone know about Fahey Lodge, Kilcommon, Co. Mayo? Does anyone know the exact date of Hugh of Newport's departure, or any other information that might help?

Inscription on the Tomb of Lieut. Col. Hugh O'Donel in Nasirabad, Rajastan, India.

Sacred to the memory of Lieut. Col.
Hugh O'Donel
Comg 13th Regt N.I.
Died 27th. Sept. 1837 aged 49 years.
This monument is erected by his bereaved and disconsolate widow and a few of his most intimate friends as a tribute of affection and regard founded upon a knowledge of his excellent qualities as a husband and a friend.

The first mention of Domhnall in the Annals of the Four Masters is in the year 1208 when we find him as Lord of Tyrconnell defending Inishowen from an O'Neill attack. After much fighting in which 'countless numbers on both sides' were slain, the Tyrconnell men 'were at length routed by dint of fighting.'

Shortly, after Domhnall retaliated and 'seized upon the spoils of the country.' A peace was then 'concluded between O'Neill and O'Donnell who entered into an alliance to assist each other against such of the English or Irish as should oppose them.'

And opposed they were in 1210 when the English 'came to Cael-uisce' (on the Erne). The combined forces of O'Neill and O'Donnell 'marched thither and slew the English' and distributed their 'goods and property among their troops.'

In 1213 Domhnall's steward went to Connaught to collect O'Donnell's tribute. 'He first went to Carbury of Drumcliff, where, with his attendants, he visited the house of the poet Murray O'Daly of Lissadil; and, being a plebian representative of a hero, he began to wrangle with the poet very much (although his lord had given him no instruction to do so). The poet being enraged at his conduct, seized a very sharp axe, and dealth him a blow which killed him on the spot, and then, to avoid O'Donnell he fled to Clanrickard.'

O'Donnell, on learning the fate of his steward, gathered his troops and went in pursuit, and 'he proceeded to plunder and burn the country, until at last MacWilliam submitted to him, having previously sent Murray to seek for refuge in Thomond.'

But O'Donnell continued his pursuit and 'proceeded to plunder and ravage that country also.' By now the poet had fled to Limerick. 'O'Donnell followed him to the gate of Limerick, and, pitching his camp there laid seige to the town; upon which the people of Limerick, at O'Donnell's command, expelled Murray, who found no asylum anywhere, but was sent from hand to hand, until he arrived in Dublin.'

Domhnall Mor now returned home where he mustered another army and marched to Dublin where he 'compelled the people of Dublin to banish Murray into Scotland; and here he remained until he composed three poems in praise of O'Donnell, imploring peace and forgiveness from him.' Murray's panegyricks had their effect. Domhnall Mor pardoned him and 'gave him lands and possessions, as was pleasing to him.' Such was the power of poets in those days.

In 1219 Domhnall led an army into north east Connaught where he 'obtained hostages and submission from O'Rourke and O'Reilly and from all the race of Aedh Finn. He afterwards passed through Fermanagh and destroyed everyplace through which he passed, both lay and ecclesiastical property, wherein there was any opposition to him.'

In 1223 Domhnall again raided Connaught and 'plundered and burned every territory which he entered, until he had received their hostages and submissions.

He tried to repeat the performance in 1230 and although he destroyed a great part of the province he didn't receive hostages.

1231 saw Domhnall, assisted by Aengus Mac Gilla-Finnen, raiding on Lough Erne where he used boats to get to Eo-inis and take all the wealth, treasures and jewels of the island including the wife of the chieftain - Cathal O'Reilly.

Three years later, in 1234 the same Aengus Mac Gilla-Finnen, Lord of Lough Erne, turned against O'Donnell and went into Tyrconnell upon a predatory incursion but O'Donnell overtook him and killed him.

In 1239 Lasarina (an O'Connor), wife of Domhnall Mor, gave a half townland of her marriage dowry, viz., Rosbirn (Co. Sligo) to Clarus Mac Mailin, and the Canons of Trinity Island, in Lough Key, in honour of the Trinity and the Virgin Mary.

1241. 'Domhnall Mor, the son of Ennaghan O'Donnell Lord of Tirconnell, Fermanagh, and Lower Connaught as far as the Curlew Mountains, and of Oriel from the plain northwards, died in the monastic habit, victorious over the world and the devil, and was interred with honour and respect in the Monastery of Assaroe (Ballyshannon), in the harvest time.

Lasarina, his wife, 'head of the women of Leth-Chuinn, died in 1282.' [Leth-Chuinn was the northern half of Ireland, but elsewhere Lasarina is called 'the greatest woman in Ireland.']

From the A.F.M. V.O'Donnell.